
Education Committee

HB 2711

Brief Description: Increasing equitable educational outcomes for foster care and homeless children and youth from prekindergarten to postsecondary education.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, J., Corry, Stonier, Ormsby, Appleton, Caldier, Davis, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Ramel, Senn, Chopp, Goodman, Fey, Pollet, Callan and Chambers.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with specified state agencies, to convene a work group to develop and implement a plan for achieving parity in educational outcomes and eliminating racial and ethnic gaps for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both.
- Prescribes tasks for the work group, including reviewing the educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care, homelessness, or both, and preparing a biannual report that summarizes the progress the state has made toward achieving related goals.
- Modifies provisions governing a biannual report for specified educational outcomes programs.
- Removes an expired reporting requirement regarding specific efforts to promote educational stability and improve educational outcomes for children in foster care

Hearing Date: 1/28/20

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386)

Background:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Legislation adopted in 2017 created the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The Children's Administration division is located within the DCYF and includes Child Protective Services, the Family Assessment Response program, foster care, and adoption support.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) supports students in foster care by encouraging innovative practices that reduce educational disruptions, threaten school stability, and improve academic performance. The OSPI designates a statewide education of homeless children and youth coordinator to review policies and create procedures to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend school.

Student Achievement Council.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.

Project Education Impact Work Group.

A 2018 budget proviso directed the DCYF in collaboration with the OSPI, the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), and the WSAC, to convene the Project Education Impact Work Group (Work Group) with aligned nonprofit organizations to create a plan for children and youth experiencing foster care and homelessness, facilitate educational equity, and to close the disparities between racial and ethnic groups by 2027.

This Work Group submitted a report in January of 2019 that recommended legislative and administrative changes necessary to achieve these goals. The report also recommended that the Work Group continue to convene to develop, implement and refine solutions, and to evaluate collective progress over time.

Programs of Education for Dependent Youth.

The OSPI and the WSAC are required to create and maintain outcome-driven services to support foster youth in completing high school and to enroll in, and complete postsecondary education. These services include contracts between the DCYF and the OSPI, and the DCYF and the WSAC, that require partnership with at least one nongovernmental agency to administer an individualized education coordination program for dependent youth.

A report related to the collective progress toward making Washington first in the nation for foster care performance metrics must be submitted by the OSPI, the WSAC, and the DCYF to the Governor and Legislature biannually.

Summary of Bill:

Project Education Impact Work Group. The OSPI, in collaboration with the DCYF, the OHY, and the WSAC is directed to convene the Project Education Impact Work Group (Work Group). The Work Group, which must include aligned nongovernmental agencies and a statewide nonprofit coalition that is representative of communities of color and people living in low-income communities, is directed to:

1. focus on students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, in pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education;
2. implement a plan for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both to achieve parity and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in educational outcomes by 2027;

3. annually review educational outcome data of children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both including kindergarten readiness, school stability, and postsecondary status;
4. evaluate outcomes, needs, and services for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, and the specific needs of children and youth of color and those with special education needs;
5. engage specific stakeholders to provide biannual recommendations;
6. and submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by October 31, 2020 and biannually thereafter on the progress made towards educational parity for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, and updates on related actions and goals, including recommendations to align and improve policy, programs, agency practice, and student supports.

Biannual Report of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the Washington Student Achievement Council, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Reporting requirements of the DCYF, the WSAC, and the OSPI are modified to a biannual report on collective progress related to becoming first in the nation in foster care according to specific performance metrics.

Cross-system Collaboration Reports.

An expired reporting requirement regarding the state's plan for cross-system collaboration to promote educational stability and improved educational outcomes for foster children is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2020.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.